



1920

Merry Christmas

1920



A Season of Cheer

Happy faces smiling
Where the ruddy hearth-fire gleams
And joyous hearts are beating
In the glow of Christmas dream

Sorrow's rule is banished
Forevermore it seems
And all the world is brighter
For the glow of Christmas dream

NO KIDDIES—NO CHRISTMAS

Children Are Absolutely Necessary to Keep the Yuletide and Happy Season in Existence.

EDWARD S. MARTIN, who is never happier than when writing about children, had a characteristic article in the Metropolitan Magazine entitled "Christmas and Children." In the course of its lines Mr. Martin introduces a suggestion that is extremely unpleasant, but he clears it away delightfully. He says:

"Consider, if there were to be a lapse of new babies for even so short a time as ten years, Santa Claus would fade out of active existence and become a mere tradition to be read about in books. A failure of the infant crop for fifteen years would result in the decay of the habit of hanging up stockings, and only antiquarians would any longer take the trouble to have Christmas trees. Of course, in such an unthinkable contingency as that our world would be in such a desperate state of dejection that it would have no fun, though it would go through the motions of existence from habit. But the kind of Christmas keeping we are used to would be knocked on the head. That lasts simply and solely because there are children. The people who have the children maintain the current Christmas practices for their children's sake, the older children maintain them for their own sake, and the folks who have no children keep them up for old times' sake and because it is the custom of the country."

"What an intolerable suggestion that is, of there being no children to be had under fifteen years old; no babies to blink and coo at the Christmas tree; no five-year-olds to come downstairs in their nightgowns after their stockings; no seven-year-olds to wake up everyone in the house hours before breakfast; no ten-year-olds to sit at the Christmas board and be warned against over-indulgence in plum pudding. No consuming interest in dolls and no market for them, no laborious searching of the toy shops, and hurrying indecision whether to get the same old toys or the new ones; no active concern about jack knives and sleds and roller skates. No having to go on about it, let us be devoutly thankful that it is only an awful idea without basis; that there are lots and lots of children in commission, of all kinds and ages, and myriads more coming, whatever croaks there may be about race suicide."

THINGS THE BOYS LONG FOR

Youngsters Prefer Toys of Contrivance to Test Their Muscular Skill or Endurance.

WHAT shall be said of that blundering kindness of heart that considers giving the boy only presents of such things as he actually needs? It is an outrage upon the spirit of Christmas to present him with new shoes, ties, handkerchiefs—something that he knows he will get anyway—when his sleeping and waking dreams for weeks before have been filled with visions of tops, balls, guns and magic lanterns, says Maud Souders in the Woman's Home Companion. The most beautiful knitted muffler woman's fingers ever constructed cannot compare with a jack-knife with four blades and a cork-screw attachment, when exhibited over the back fence to a neighbor boy on Christmas morning. Very soon after the days of kills a boy reaches the age when he yearns with his whole soul after any toy or contrivance that will test his muscular skill or endurance. At this age an appropriate present would be a rawhide or rope lariat, such as is used by the Buffalo Bill riders. A pair of hand or arm stiffs will be received with equal favor, and in the same category comes a new fishing rod, snow shoes, tennis racket, golf club, a good ball, lamp or cyclometer for his wheel, or even a live pet, a new dog, a pair of rabbits or guinea pigs—something that he can pet and train for his own.

Yule was the name of the ancient Scandinavian festival held at the time of the winter solstice. The word is of uncertain origin, says The Housekeeper, but it probably is taken directly from the Icelandic word "Yol," meaning a feast. It is curious to note how many nations of old marked the "turn of the year"—that is, the December solstice—by festivals. The Egyptians, the Hindus, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans all had feasts at this season, but especially the Northern nations—the Teutons, the Scandinavians, the early natives of Britain—rejoiced at the event of the sun's turn on its course. The festival was kept with much eating and drinking and noisy merriment. One of the ceremonies was the placing of an enormous log of wood—often so large that it required the strength of several men to bring it in—upon the hearth fire in the huge fireplace. The burning of the Yule log was thought to insure good fortune to the family, especially when charred pieces of the log burned the year before and kept over for that purpose were used to light it.

Funny Christmas Habit.

There is not a drug store, cigar shop or barroom in the larger cities which has not been made the strange room for Christmas presents brought before for sets in. The strange part of it is that every man who utilizes the friendship of his favorite place round the corner thinks he is the only one who thought of the plan. Realizing that the stores will be crowded, many far-sighted heads of families bought their presents a week in advance, and then, fearing the nature of the mysterious package would be discovered at the office or at home, they hid upon the device of making a cache in some resort near home.

RING OUT, YE MERRY BELLS!

Ring out, ye merry bells! Welcome, bright icicles! Welcome, old holly-crowned Christmas again! Sithe as a child at play, keeping his holiday, Welcome him back from the snow peak and plain.

Up with the holly bough, green from the winter's brow, Look up your lodgers and cares for a day. Out to the forest go, gather the mistletoe, Old and young, rich and poor, up and away!

Up with the holly boughs, ay, and the laurel now, In with the yule log, and brighten the hearth; Quick! here he is again, come with his joyous train, Laughter and music and friendship and mirth.

Up with the holly boughs, high in each minor house, Garnish the antlers that hang in the hall; Yes, and the "neck" of corn with a gay wreath adorn, Rich as the bloom on the cottager's wall.

Wealth has its duties now, Christian, you will allow; Think, then, ye rich, whilst your tables are spread, Think of the wretched ones, Poverty's stricken sons, Weeping whilst children are asking for bread.

Ring out, ye merry bells! ring till your music swells, Out o'er the mountains, and far on the main; Ring till those cheerless ones catch up your merry tones, Singing, "Come, Christmas, again and again."

—Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly.

First Xmas Carol Found in the Roman Mass

CAROLS were originally accompanied with a dance, and this carol dancing is part of the rhythmic movement of the Oberammergau play, as well as of the dances of the Shakers of Lebanon in New York state.

The first Christmas carol in history is the "Gloria in Excelsis" found in the Roman mass, and in the Epistolary Book of Common Prayer. It is ascribed to Telesphorus, bishop of Rome, about the year A. D. 130, and is common in both the eastern and western churches.

An old English carol begins with the notable words:

Behold a simple, tender babe In freezing winter night, In homely manger trembling lies, A low, a piteous sight.

The "higher critics" have wondered how the shepherds could watch their flocks by night, even in winter in Judea, but this presented no difficulty to Robert Southwell, the author of this quaint carol, who as a Jesuit was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and after enduring the tortures of the rack, was executed in 1594.

A popular carol among the Germans is one written by Martin Luther for his little son Hans. It begins:

From the highest heaven I come to tell The gladdest news which e'er befell.

A very old story is told in connection with this carol. In order to give it realistic effect in a certain Lutheran church it used to be sung by a boy who had been on the roof of the church dressed as an angel. One day the rope broke, and the boy was killed. This put an end to a very beautiful but dangerous Christmas custom.

At a time when the liturgical and biblical plays were popular the Christmas carol was an important feature. In Italy in the time of St. Francis of Assisi, in order to instruct the people, the villagers came to the church carrying lighted torches and there they saw the scene of the manger filled with hay and the ox and ass standing in their places near the Virgin and Child. Then it was that St. Francis and his thrice stood by the manger all night long, giving God thanks that by this means the hearts of the people had been touched.

"Rare old Ben Jonson," in the days of the "Good Queen Bess," wrote a carol which begins "I sing the birth was born tonight." And about that time appeared a very popular carol which is sung in "Merrie England" even to the present day, the first line of which is "God rest you, merrie gentlemen." Some old Christmas carols have come down to us in half Latin and half English. Among them is a carol which appears in the collection for Grace church, New York city:

When Christ was born of pure Marie, In Bethlehem, that fair little, Angels sang with mirth and glee In Excelsis Gloria.

In this "Grace collection" there is a carol commencing "Over the world on Christmas morn," by Dr. Mackay Smith.

The sixteenth carol of the sixteenth

"And Santa, Be Sure and Don't Forget—"



CHRISTMAS BELLS

The great yule logs are blazing high, The halls with holly green are drest, And hithsome maids and merry lads Are gaily clad in all their best. And have ye seen the fairest maid, That ere hath dwelt 'twixt sea and sea?

And for my love and for my faith, Think ye shall bring a gift to me? O, ring, ye joy-bells, gaily ring! O, merry minstrels, harp and sing! Fill every heart with Christmas cheer, For Christmas comes but once a year.

The yule fire blazes warm and high, On oaken rafters, blackened wall, It shines upon the fairest maid, As down she dances thro' the hall. I fling my weary harp aside, (And will she stoop to such as I?) I haste to meet her underneath The mystic branches hanging high. O, ring, ye joy-bells, gaily ring! O, merry minstrels, harp and sing! O, fill my heart with Christmas cheer, For Christmas comes but once a year.

Who hath so rare or fair a gift, As this my love hath brought to me? For I was not a minstrel lad, Yet with her lips her heart she gave. Her heart, all pure as Christmas snow, And for her love and for her faith, Fourth unto Jesus and war I'll go. O, ring, ye joy-bells, gaily ring! O, heart of mine, rejoice and sing. For Christmas love and Christmas cheer Shall bless our lives the whole round year.

—Annie Louise Brackbridge.

He Just Can't Wait to See Santa Claus



"Angels from the Realms of Glory" is by the great hymn writer James Montgomery, who for thirty years edited a Sheffield newspaper in England. He is often confounded with Robert Montgomery, who was ridiculed and denounced by Macaulay.

"Sing a Song This Blessed Morn" was written by Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, nephew of the great English poet and father of the present Bishop of Salisbury. Dr. Wordsworth was Master of Harrow, Canon of Westminster, and Bishop of Lincoln.

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night" is by Nahum Tate, poet laureate, associated with the Tate and Brady version of the Psalms. He died when in prison for debt.

The popular hymn "Christmas Awake, Salute the Happy Morn," was written by John Byron, a Lancashire man, who was esteemed a good scholar and poet in his day. He was born in Manchester in 1691.

The two eminent sweet singers of the church, John Kibbe and Reginald Heber, bishop of Calcutta, have written Christmas hymns, but they lack those elements of popular song which constitute the Christmas carol. Kibbe sweetly sings:

Eden, Eden widening round, From a clear blue river, Out after oh the wondrous sound Is echoed on forever, Glory to God as high, on earth be peace.

The lines of the gentle Heber have their lesson in these days of commercial unrest:

If gaily clothed and proudly fed, In dangerous wealth we dwell; Bewildered on the manner bed And lowly cottage cell.

Xmas Posy Party

"A Garden of Flowers"—an ideal scheme this for a fancy Christmas dress party. When the invitations are sent out each guest should be requested to come to "The Garden of Flowers" dressed to represent a flower. White flower is "daisy" should be intimate to the hostess when accepting the invitation. For the supper table decoration for this party, in the center stand a large doll dressed as a rose—the queen of flowers. In her hands should be fastened as many garlands of baby ribbons or strings of small blossoms as there are guests. Attach little gifts at the other ends of the garlands appropriate to the costumes of the guests that are to receive them, such as brooches and scarves with flowers in enamel, baskets of sweets trimmed with flowers, or pretty cut glass bottles of perfume decorated with blossoms. The ribbons or garlands should be arranged that each small guest finds a responding gift; thus, Violet's presser adorned with the flowers she in turn, etc. The menus should be the form of flowers or petals and adorned with candle shades of rose color.

Christmas Song

In every babe that gains the light Through rack of human pain, In each new-breathing soul tonight The Christ-child lives again. In every drop of anguish, pressed From pallid woman's brow, In every virgin mother-breast His Mother whispers now.

And wise men through the darkness lie, Lo! In the East—a Star! O little Christ who is to die Was your soul's journey far?

Strange meteor wounds of death and birth Lighting an endless sea; A little child has come to earth And He must die for me!

—By Mary McNeil Penollosa, in the Craftsman.

Origin of Yuletide

Yule was the name of the ancient Scandinavian festival held at the time of the winter solstice. The word is of uncertain origin, says The Housekeeper, but it probably is taken directly from the Icelandic word "Yol," meaning a feast. It is curious to note how many nations of old marked the "turn of the year"—that is, the December solstice—by festivals. The Egyptians, the Hindus, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans all had feasts at this season, but especially the Northern nations—the Teutons, the Scandinavians, the early natives of Britain—rejoiced at the event of the sun's turn on its course. The festival was kept with much eating and drinking and noisy merriment. One of the ceremonies was the placing of an enormous log of wood—often so large that it required the strength of several men to bring it in—upon the hearth fire in the huge fireplace. The burning of the Yule log was thought to insure good fortune to the family, especially when charred pieces of the log burned the year before and kept over for that purpose were used to light it.

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